

HOME AND ABROAD

WHO WAS AUTHOR OF "DU BARRY?"

M. Jean Richepin Explains His
Claim as It Will Be Unfolded
in New York Courts.

SUIT AGAINST MR. BELASCO

French Author Says He Appeals
to the Justice of the
American People.

[SPECIAL CABLE TO THE HERALD.]
HERALD BUREAU.
No. 49 AVENUE DE L'OPERA,
PARIS, Saturday.
The HERALD's European edition publishes the following:—
This is the story of the creation of the famous play "La du Barry," as given by M. Jean Richepin, the eminent French author.
M. Richepin, who is a leading spirit in the projected movement of the Société des Auteurs Dramatiques, is anxious to have the position of French playwrights as to their property placed before the American public, and calls for the first time on Mr. A. H. Hummel, the society's United States representative, who is at present sojourning in Paris.

M. Richman fairly glowed with delight at the opportunity of telling his story of the creation of the above mentioned place, which has met with such unequivocal success in New York and other American cities.

He said:—"In 1900 I first met Mr. David Belasco at the home of Miss Elizabeth Marbury, in Versailles. The latter introduced him to me as a manager who desired one of my plays for Mrs. Leslie Carter.

"At that time among other projects I had two scenarios. I told the story of one of these to Mr. Belasco, but he did not find it suitable for his star.

Contract Was Signed.

"I then spoke to him of the second, which was a play, the central figure in which was our Du Barry.

"I explained that Du Barry became famous as the mistress of Louis XV., and I then related the scenario of my play, Miss Marbury being my interpreter.

"This scenario pleased him as being suitable to Mrs. Carter's talent and a contract was signed shortly after this by Mr. Belasco and myself.

"According to this contract, I agreed to de-

"Mr. Belasco at this date was to pay me \$1,000. He was to pay me another sum when he accepted the play definitely, and for these sums were to be in advance of author's royalties.

"I worked all the winter, all the spring and part of the summer of 1900 at 'Du Barry.' My historical studies were lengthy and minute and were all taken from original documents and memoirs of the time.

Transformed the Character.

"I added a great deal of my own invention, so as to give the historical side, that which 'Du Barry' lacked, in order that it should be dramatically interesting. Everyone knows that Du Barry was a woman with a vicious and vile soul, who died in

most abject and cowardly way. Of course these characteristics do not make her a very sympathetic personality.

"I made of her a woman whose life was dominated by a single great love. I made of her a heroine of love whose death could appeal to true womanhood and to true manhood.

"Thus transformed by my invention and explained by love, the rôle became interesting and beautiful, though untrue, and I may say false, historically, yet dramatically sympathetic.

"I finished my play in June, 1900, at Palma de Majorca, in the Balearic Islands, and

"At this time the 'Du Barry,' which I handed him, was much too long. It was composed of twelve tableaux. I knew this was too much, but I left it in this way purposely, so that Mr. Belasco and Mrs. Leslie Carter should choose the tableaux which most pleased them.

"The choice was made by all of us in combination, using the following method:

mon during several conversations we had in London and later after a conference among our three selves in Paris. The 'Du Barry' arranged in nine tableaux, was definitely accepted by Mr. Belasco, which fact is amply proved by Mr. Belasco's paying the second instalment of the stipulated money coming to me through Miss Marbury and M. Roger as business intermediaries.

"According to my contract my play was to be produced in America during the following theatrical season. Mr. Belasco having asked me to find a designer for the many different tableaux, I introduced him to M. Chaineux, the designer of the Comédie Française and they signed an agreement.

"During the following winter I corresponded with Mr. Belasco. He wrote to me in the most admiring terms about my play. But he was not satisfied regarding a military march of the period which he wished to place in the play, with my permission.

"I told him I would do it, but he had only praise for Mr. Belasco's devotion to our united cause.

"Soon, however, I was obliged to entertain doubts about the play being produced at the time stipulated in the contract. Mr. Belasco

"When the time came," that summer of 1941, "I refused, announcing then for the first time that he did not like the play."

Thereafter, Mr. Belasco had written a "Du Barry," which was not mine, the first performance in America, in December, 1941.

"When I received a criticism on 'Du Barry,' I felt convinced that, while the play had been written by me, it was not mine, but with everything of my own personal invention and with my exclusive idea of having a woman dominated by a single passion."

After this Mr. Belasco gave me back my manuscript, which he had had so long.

It was returned to me by his lawyer in Paris, M. Cachart, but I was careful to accept it before our agent, M. Boyer, and he

For the official and judicial agents of our association, who signed each page of the manuscript.

Barry produced in New York was sold to the renowned German actress, Frau Odillon, who played it in Vienna.

German and American Lawsuits.

"This prevented me from having 'Du Barry' played in Germany. I am suing at the present time and do not doubt but that I shall win in Vienna, but this suit will only be judged after one I have brought against Mr. Belasco in the New York courts, which I have entrusted to Mr. Hummel.

"I have now been righted in taking this step I have appealed to the justice of the American people, and it is before this justice that I wish to place my cause, certain that I shall obtain more sympathy than loyalty and fearlessness, believing that as has been the case for ages, truth is mighty and will prevail."